

Sleeping Beauty - Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1:

Carabosse - ruler of the underworld, the Roots, Weeds and Thorns - and the Lilac Fairy - ruler of the upper world with its Flowers, Sky and Sun - struggle with the memories of an impossible love. Neither can live in the space of the other but, united through a child whom they each struggle to possess, a beautiful new blossom is formed.

Scene 2:

A newborn's arrival is celebrated by the King and Queen of the Garden of Flowers. Everyone is excited from the lowliest seedlings to the most elegantly scented petals. Birds - handmaidens of the Lilac Fairy - arrive to bestow gifts of Beauty, Purity, and Elegance on the newborn child. The festivities are abruptly interrupted by Carabosse, who is outraged by not having received an invitation to the christening. In retaliation, he casts his spell: the newborn - Aurora - will live for 16 years in the upper world garden, after which she will prick her finger on a spindle and become subsumed as a thorn into the underworld. The Lilac Fairy, arriving late to the celebrations, is unable to reverse the spell, but is instead able to alter it so that Aurora will not become a thorn, but that the world of flowers will fall into a still sleep underneath the hedge of thorns that will rise around them. The spells can only be broken by true love's kiss.

Scene 3:

Happy-go-lucky knitting and weaving seedlings go about their business until Carabosse crosses their path, sowing discord. Carabosse is on his way to ensure his spell is fulfilled.

Scene 4:

Celebrations are underway for Aurora's sixteenth birthday. Arriving at the party Aurora has now grown into a vibrant and enchanting Rosebud. The young suitors swoon around her. An old lady appears, offering Aurora a beautiful golden spindle; before the King and Queen can take it from her, Aurora pricks her finger. Carabosse reveals himself and claims his prize, but before he can bring Aurora with him the Lilac Fairy arrives with her handmaiden. They fulfill the vow to protect Aurora and put all the flowers to sleep. Deadly weeds and thorns grow around the flowers, a hedge which only one who is pure of heart can get through without becoming entangled.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1:

With the flower garden long forgotten, new plants and trees have sprung forth. Celebrating the arrival of spring, a party of young revelers enjoys a picnic in a clearing in the forest. Among them there is one who is more distinguished than others named Florimund. The Lilac Fairy, searching for someone able to break the spell on Aurora, seizes the moment and guides him deeper into the forests.

Scene 2:

Arriving at a lake deep in the forest, Florimund is surrounded by Naiads, water nymphs and servants of the Lilac Fairy. Rising out of the water, the Lilac Fairy conjures a vision that is so true of the beautiful Aurora that it feels real to the touch.

Scene 3:

Florimund, smitten with love, is guided by the Lilac Fairy and plunges deeper into the forest to find the sleeping Aurora. At the edge of the world of Carabosse, the Lilac Fairy can go no further and sends Florimund forward to face the darkness on his own.

Scene 4:

Carabosse, jealously guarding his domain, is disturbed by the approaching Florimund and commands his destruction. Florimund almost succumbs to the thorns but at last fights his way through and breaks the spell with true love's kiss.

Scene 5:

With the spell broken, the Garden of Flowers blooms anew, bringing birds and flowers to celebrate the union of Aurora and Florimund. Aurora is no longer just a blossom: through the prick of his world, Carabosse still jealously guards the lovely flower we now call a Rose, bestowing the sting of sharp thorns on greedy fingers. The Rose has both flower and thorns, shared by the worlds of Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy.